

Message Text

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12

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 FEA-01 AEC-05 AID-05 CEA-01

CIAE-00 CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 FPC-01 H-01 INR-05

INT-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-03 RSC-01 SAM-01

OES-03 SP-02 SS-15 STR-01 TRSE-00 FRB-01 /074 W

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R 060512Z DEC 74

FM AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2481

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MELBOURNE 1439

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, ENRG, ECON, AS

SUBJECT: CURRENT STATUS OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S REDCLIFFS
PETROCHEMICAL PROJECT

REF: (A) MELBOURNE 1173; (B) MELBOURNE A-44 OF SEPTEMBER
27, 1973; (C) MELBOURNE A-21 OF APRIL 30, 1973

IN A RECENT VISIT TO ADELAIDE I DISCUSSED THE REDCLIFFS
PROJECT WITH JOHN BONYTHON, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF SANTOS
LTD., AND DON DUNSTAN, PREMIER OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA. BOTH
STATED CATEGORICALLY THAT THE REDCLIFFS PROJECT APPEARS TO
BE DYING BECUASE OF THE POLICIES AND ATTITUDES OF THE
FEDERAL MINISTER FOR MINERALS AND ENERGY, REX CONNOR, AND
BECAUSE OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS. CONNOR'S INSISTENCE ON
51 PERCENT LOCAL EQUITY (PUBLICALLY HE APPEARS TO HAVE
RELAXED THIS POINT, BUT BY NO MEANS HAS THERE BEEN A VARIANCE
IN PRIVATE); HIS REFUSAL TO ALLOW THE EXPORT OF METHANE GAS
WHICH HAS JUST RECENTLY BEEN RECONFIRMED; HIS REQUIREMENT
THAT THE RESIDUAL LPG MUST BE TURNED INTO GASOLINE, AND THE
ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES HAVE ALL CREATED PROBLEMS TO SERIOUSLY
AFFECT THIS MAJOR MULTI MILLION DOLLAR PROJECT THATWOULD GIVE
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A GREAT BOOST TO SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S STRAINED ECONOMY. AS

REPORTED EARLIER (SEE REFTELS (B) AND (C)) CONNOR HAS
CONSISTENTLY BEEN THE STUMBLING BLOCK AND THOUGH DUNSTAN
HAS FROM TIME TO TIME BEEN QUOTED AS SAYING THAT HE
WOULD FIGHT ALL THE WAY HE IS OBVIOUSLY DEPENDENT UPON
THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO KEEP SOUTH
AUSTRALIA VIABLE ECONOMICALLY AND UNER PRESENT ECONOMIC
CONDITIONS MUST WORRY MORE ABOUT INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISE
ALREADY IN EXISTENCE.
BRAND

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